
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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No Discharge Areas in New Hampshire

The DES Clean Vessel Act Program and the US Environmental Protection Agency cooperatively worked to establish a No Discharge Area for all New Hampshire coastal waters. The goal of the No Discharge Area is to help protect New Hampshire coastal waters from the discharge of pollutants such as nutrients and bacteria.

What is a No Discharge Area?

A "No Discharge Area" is a body of water or a designated area of water where the discharge of all boat sewage, whether treated or untreated, is prohibited. The Clean Water Act allows states to prohibit all boat sewage discharges by creating a No Discharge Area if the state can provide evidence that the waters require greater protection than the law provides.

DES decided to proactively move forward to designate its coastal waters to protect the numerous shellfish beds, beaches, and other recreational opportunities that are available in New Hampshire's coastal waters.

In waters that are not designated as No Discharge, federal law allows for overboard discharge of boat sewage that is first treated by an on-board marine sanitation device (MSD) but prohibits the discharge of untreated boat sewage. This waste must be contained in a holding tank to be later removed at a pumpout or dump station. Pumpout stations service boats with fixed toilets while dump stations are for portable toilets. New Hampshire's coastal waters are currently serviced by five stationary pumpout stations located at marinas and one mobile pumpout boat that can travel to where the service is required.

Boat sewage discharges are highly concentrated with bacteria and nutrients, and those boats with treatment systems (MSDs) may also contain toxic disinfectants such as formaldehyde. All of these pollutants can contribute to unhealthy water for shellfish, other fauna and flora, and unsafe conditions for swimming and other recreation activities. By prohibiting the discharge of boat sewage, DES is helping to protect the state's sensitive natural resources.

All inland waters of the state were designated as No Discharge Areas in 1975. There are numerous pumpout and dump stations available on some of the largest lakes in the state, including Lake Winnepesaukee, Lake Winnisquam, Squam Lake and Lake Sunapee.

If you own a boat with a toilet, please do your part to reduce pollution by using pumpout and dump stations. To find a pumpout or dump station near you, visit the DES Clean Vessel Act website at www.des.nh.gov/wmb/cva.

Boundaries of No Discharge Area and Pumpout Facilities Available

